

Message Text

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, JO, XF

SUBJECT STEPS -- VIEW FROM JORDAN

REF: AMMAN 0659

1. THE NEXT FOLLOWING CABLE FROM AMMAN (REFTEL) PROVIDES PROBABLY MUCH MORE THAN YOU CURRENTLY REALLY WANT TO KNOW ABOUT WHAT JORDAN'S VIEWS ARE ON NEXT STEPS IN THE AREA. THIS TELEGRAM GIVES YOU A TIGHT SUMMARY OF OUR MAIN POINTS.

2. KING HUSSEIN AND PRIME MINISTER RIFAI APPROACH QUESTION OF NEXT STEPS ON PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WITH GROWING FRUSTRATION AT THE DRIFT OF EVENTS SINCE SINAI II. FOR THEM THE DRIFT IS SEEN IN THE INCREASING ARAB DIVISIONS CONTRIBUTING TO HARDENED POSITIONS ON ALL SIDES ACCOMPANIED BY A SEANENED CAPACITY IN THE US (PARTLY FOR DOMESTIC REASONS) TO ACT IN 1976, AND PERHAPS EVEN LATER. KING AND RIFAI STILL BELIEVE US IS THE KEY TO MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT BECAUSE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH BOTH SIDES. BUT THEY ALSO NOW BELIEVE INITIATIVE HAS SHIFTEE FROM US TO SYRIA WHOSE OBJECTIVES OF FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND TANGIBLE GAINS FOR PALESTIANIANS THEY CONSIDERED MODERATE. US POSITION ON OTHER HAND IS CHARACTERIZED BY REPEATED GENERALITIES ABOUT DETERMINATION TO HAVE FORWARD MOVEMENT AND, FOR JORDAN, DISTRUBING OVERTONES OF "EGYPT FIRST" INCLINATIONS.

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3. KING'S AND PRIME MINISTER'S VIEWS ABOUT NEGOTIATING OPTIONS

REFLECT THEIR PESSIMISTIC MOOD. ON GOLAN, THEY ARE CONVINCED SYRIA WILL ACCEPT ONLY A UNILATERAL PULL BACK OR NEGOTIATION ON A FULL WITHDRAWAL WITH LATTER PROBABLY LINKED TO "SOMETHING" FOR PLO. ON SINAI, THERE IS SUSPICION OF EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI COLLUSION (MAYBE INCLUDING US) TO ARRANGE SINAI III. THEY BELIEVE THAT TO ACHIEVE SUCH A PULL BACK EGYPT WOULD PLAN TO HAVE IT BE ACCOMPANIED EITHER BY ISRAELI WAR WITH SYRIA TO NEUTRALIZE SYRIA AS AN IMPEDIMENT TO FURTHER EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI MOVEMENT IN DISENGAGEMENT PROCESS, TO BY ISRAELI-JORDAN NEGOTIATIONS ON WEST BANK TO GIVE SOME ARAB DIPLOMATIC COVER TO EGYPTIAN PARTICIPATION IN ANOTHER SINAI AGREEMENT -- THE LATTER IS A NON-STARTER IN AMMAN. ON THE WEST BANK, JORDAN SAYS IT INTENDS TO ADHERE TO RABAT AGREEMENTS UNLESS PRINCIPAL ARAB LEADERS CHANGE RABAT -- A DEVELOPMENT THAT GOJ BELIEVES REQUIRES FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ON WEST BANK JERUSALEM AND GAZA, I.E. SUBSTANTIALLY MORE THAN THEY ASSUME ISRAEL CONTEMPLATES. BUT IN SUCH CASE, JORDAN WOULD EVEN GO IT ALONE ON WEST BANK. JORDAN ALSO PREFERS TO FORCE PLO TO TRY HAND AT NEGOTIATING ABOUT WEST BANK IN BELIEF (PERHAPS TOO UNQUALIFIED IN OUR JUDGMENT) THAT PLO WOULD CRUMBLE IN PROCESS FROM INTERNAL DIFFERENCES THUS LEADING ARAB STATES EVENTUALLY TO TURN TO JORDAN. KING AND RIFAI PREPARED TO WAIT OUT THAT SCENARIO, THUS ALLOWING JORDAN TO CONTINUE IN INTERIM TO ENJOY RABAT SUBSIDIES AND THE ENDING OF ISOLATION IN THE ARAB WORLD. MEANWHILE, RIFAI PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT PLO WISH -- PARALLELED BY ISRAELI RIGHTWINGER STATEMENTS -- FOR SOLUTION THAT LEADS TO PLO TAKEOVER OF JORDAN.

4. ON MULTILATERAL APPROACHES, GOJ BELIEVES JANUARY UNSC DRAFT RESOLUTION WENT FAR TO SATISFY ISRAEL AND US REGARDING PALESTINIAN ACCEPTANCE BOTH OF ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE AND OF RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 328 AND REQUIRING IN RETURN US-ISRAELI ACCEPTANCE OF

PALESTINIAN POLITICAL RIGHTS. GOJ PRIVATE POSITION ON GENEVA ATTENDANCE IS FLEXIBLY DEPENDENT ON OTHER ARAB GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS AND WHAT ADVANTAGES THERE WOULD BE FOR JORDAN. GOJ IS PROBABLY AGAINST ANY JOINT DELEGATION WITH PLO, AND BELIEVES SYRIANS WOULD NOT ACCEPT ONE FOR THEMSELVES. JORDANIANS ARE LESS CATEGORIC BUT STILL DOUBTFUL ABOUT A PLO PRESENCE ON ANY JOINT ARAB DELEGATION. THEY THINK SYRIA WILL HOLD OUT FOR PLO PARTICIPATION IN ITS OWN RIGHT. PREPARATORY CONFERENCE CANNOT IN THEIR JUDGMENT ESCAPE QUESTION OF PLO
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INITIAL ATTENDANCE IN SUCH A FORUM. KING AND RIFAI HAVE NOT APPEARED DEMONSTRABLY FOR OR AGAINST PROSPECT OF US MOVEMENT TOWARD PLO. THEY WOULD CERTAINLY WANT US TO ENSURE THAT ANY PLO ENTRY INTO NEGOTIATIONS CARRIES WITH IT SOLID REQUIREMENT OF PLO ACCEPTANCE OF FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR AGREEMENTS REACHED-- A DEVELOPMENT WHICH KING AND RIFAI SAY THEY FEEL WILL WRECK PLO.

5. IN SUM, JORDAN WOULD LIKE TO SEE CONTINUING MOMENTUM

BY US IN 1976, BUT INCREASINGLY DOUBTS THAT WILL HAPPEN.
CONSEQUENTLY, POSITIONS SEEN AS CONTINUING TO HARDEN, WITH
PROSPECT OF ARABS PRESSING AT UN (MAY UNDOF MANDATE RENEWAL,
AND UNGA) AND NON-ALIGNED MEETINGS TO GET GREATER ACCEPTANCE OF
TEXT VETOED UNSC RESOLUTION, ISRAEL'S EXPULSION FROM UN AND
FURTHER
ISOLATION OF ISRAEL AND US ON MIDDLE EAST QUESTIONS. HOPE IS
THAT THOSE DEVELOPMENTS WILL "EDUCATE" US PUBLIC AND
BRING GREATER US PRESSURE ON ISRAEL FOR NEARLY FULL
WITHDRAWAL AND A SIGNIFICANT SETTLEMENT FOR PALESTINIANS,
WITH THE LATTER PRESUMABLY CAUSING THE BREAK UP OF THE PLO AND
THUS BEING CONSISTENT WITH JORDAN'S OWN WEST BANK INTERESTS.
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